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**JAPANESE
FIELD ARTILLERY**
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Section I. ORGANIZATION.

1. **GENERAL.** A salient feature of the organization of Japanese artillery prior to the outbreak of the present war was the absence of any adequate provision for the control of artillery by higher echelons. Preponderant, indeed almost exclusive, employment of artillery in the role of a forward infantry-support weapon justified, in the minds of Japanese staff officers, the allocation of small artillery units to infantry control, and a disproportionate number of independent artillery units. Even the absence of effective provisions for divisional control was justified under this concept.

Within the past 2 years, however, both army artillery headquarters (or artillery commands) and group artillery headquarters have been identified. The army artillery headquarters has a total personnel of 110 and is commanded by a lieutenant general or major general. The commander exercises direct command over all artillery directly attached to the army, and provides for unified control of army and division artillery.

The artillery group headquarters is commanded by a major general or colonel and includes a total personnel of 170 officers and enlisted men. This headquarters exercises control of all division artillery and ensures coordination of the regimental artillery of the constituent regiments of the divisions.

2. **DIVISION ARTILLERY.—a. Command.** According to Japanese doctrine, "The division commander as a rule consolidates all the artillery, both divisional and attached, and entrusts its direction to the division artillery commander." Nevertheless, the regulations state that "depending on the situation, an important part of the artillery may be placed at the disposal of front-line commanders," and thus far in actual practice this allocation of artillery has been the rule rather than an exception.

Theoretically, at least, the division commander defines the basic principles relating to the disposition of artillery and the intensity of fire, and incorporates in his field order directions necessary to ensure effective cooperation between infantry and artillery. The division artillery commander, in turn, usually a colonel, assigns missions to each battalion or other unit under his control and provides for coordinated control of fire.

b. **The Standard Artillery Regiment (Horse-drawn).** The normal artillery component of the Japanese triangular division is the 36-gun regiment of 75-mm field or mountain artillery. The regiment may be either horse-drawn or motorized; if the former, it has a personnel of about 2,300. The horse-drawn regiment consists of a regimental headquarters, three bat-

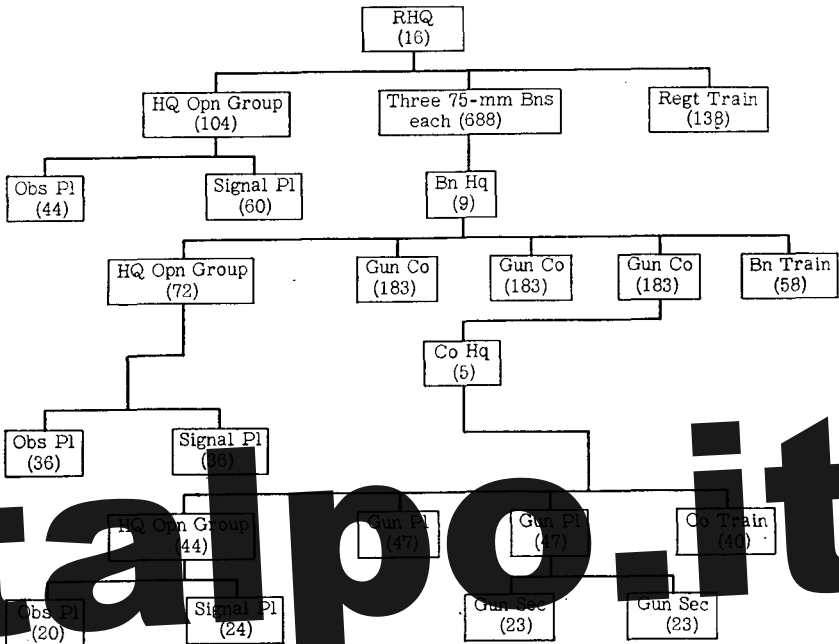


Figure 1.—The Standard Artillery Regiment (Horse-drawn).

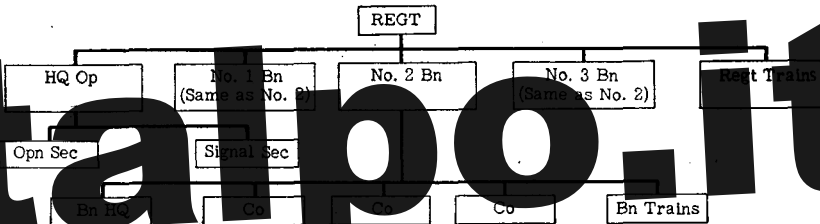


Figure 2.—The Motorized Field Artillery Regiment.

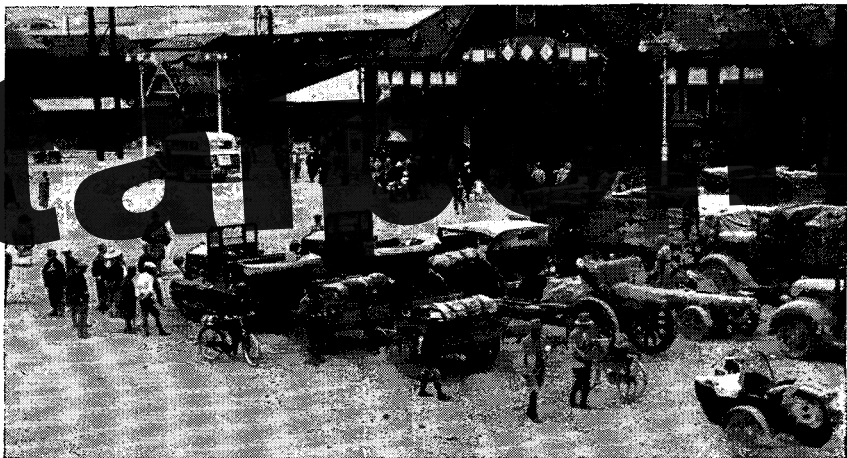


Figure 3.—Part of a motorized 105-mm gun battery. (The tractors are 4-ton Model 94 Sumidas; one draws two Model 92 gun caissons, each holding 24 rounds, the other a Model 92 105-mm gun. The touring car is a Model 1929 Buick. Beyond the Buick is a Model 94 truck chassis fitted as a battery detail vehicle.)

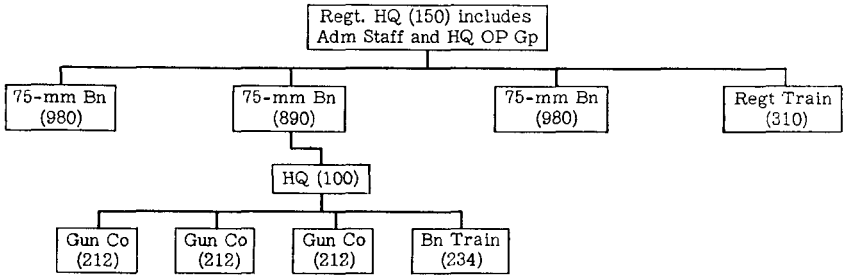


Figure 4.—The Mountain Artillery (pack) Regiment

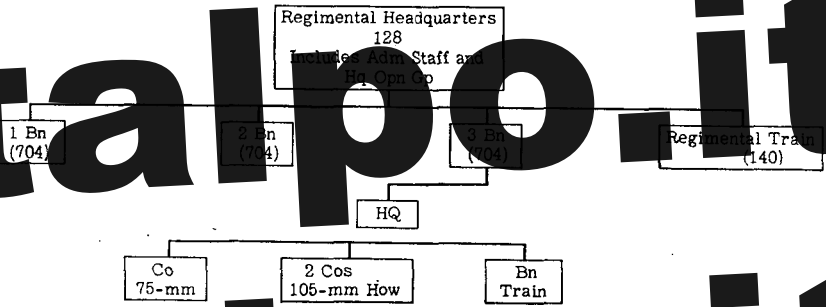


Figure 5.—The Mixed Artillery Regiment



Figure 6.—Model 92 (1932) 105-mm gun in position in a depression on the reverse slope of a hill.

talions armed with 75-mm guns, and a regimental train. Approximately 2,000 horses are used for traction and mounts.

The regiment is commanded by a colonel or lieutenant colonel, with an adjutant and a staff of 14 noncommissioned officers and enlisted men. Its headquarters operational group, with a total personnel of 104, comprises an observation platoon and a signal platoon of two sections (one wire and one radio). The regimental train, commanded by a captain or a lieutenant, has a personnel of 138 officers and enlisted men allocated to three ammunition platoons and one field baggage platoon. Each battalion has a total strength of 688 officers and enlisted men; each gun company (battery) has a complement of 183, while 58 officers and enlisted men are in charge of each battalion train.

c. The Standard Artillery Regiment (Motorized). The total strength of the motorized version of the standard artillery regiment is somewhat smaller than that of the horse-drawn regiment, with 124 men in headquarters, 107 assigned to regimental trains, and 503 to each of three battalions. The total authorized regimental strength is 1,920.

d. The Mountain Artillery (Pack) Regiment. The organization of the mountain artillery regiment is similar to that of the standard regiment, except that all equipment is carried on pack animals, and the companies (batteries) are armed with thirty-six 75-mm mountain guns instead of the field pieces. Its strength is somewhat greater than that of the standard field artillery regiment. A table showing the strength of the Hosokawa field artillery of the Kawagishi Unit gives the total strength of the mountain artillery regiment as 2,894. In some cases, however, it may be more than 3,000.

Some regiments include a battalion of 105-mm pack howitzers, for the existence of such a weapon has been reported, and there is reference to it in a Japanese document. The traverse of the weapon as reported is very narrow, in contrast to the current tendency in the construction of new Japanese artillery pieces which have a traverse of at least 30°. This factor, together with certain other evidence, suggests that the weapon may be an old one.

e. The Mixed Artillery Regiment. Mixed artillery regiments have basically the same organization as the other types. They normally are equipped with twelve 75-mm guns and twenty-four 105-mm howitzers. When horse-drawn, the regiment numbers approximately 2,380 officers and men; this figure will be materially reduced with motorization.

f. Artillery in the Strengthened Division. In the strengthened division, as distinguished from the normal triangular type, the artillery element consists of an artillery group commanded by a major general or colonel. Such a group comprises a headquarters and a regiment of field artillery, armed with 75-mm guns and 105-mm howitzers. It also includes a battalion of medium artillery equipped with 150-mm howitzers. Other independent artillery units also may be attached if the missions of the group or tactical

exigencies warrant such increases in its strength. Antiaircraft and anti-tank units also may operate under the control of the artillery group.

g. The Medium Artillery Battalion. The medium artillery battalion, as pointed out in **f** above, may be assigned or attached to the artillery group of a strengthened division. Possibly because the Japanese are inadequately supplied with this type of artillery, constituent companies, or even smaller units of the battalion in many instances, will be attached piecemeal. A medium artillery battalion on Saipan was equipped with twelve 150-mm howitzers, eight 105-mm howitzers, and four unidentified pieces. Usually, the battalion will have a total of twelve pieces.

The battalion consists of a headquarters, with the usual administrative staff and operational group, and three companies each equipped with four 150-mm howitzers. The total strength of the battalion is estimated at 950 officers and enlisted men. Traction of guns and trains is afforded by 769 horses. It is to be expected that such battalions may be motorized, but no such organizations thus far have been encountered.

3. HEAVY ARTILLERY. There is little information about Japanese heavy artillery; but it is known that there are heavy artillery regiments of both the mobile and fixed type. Although no organizations of the mobile type are believed to have been in existence prior to 1937, there now are as many as 12 regiments. The fixed heavy artillery regiments were designed originally to consist of two battalions, each having 4 gun batteries, and it is believed that the mobile type are similarly organized.

The mobile units are tractor-drawn and are armed with 150-mm (5.9 inches) and 240-mm (9.45 inches) howitzers. The fixed type, in addition to 240-mm howitzers, are reported to be equipped with an undetermined number of 300-mm howitzers.

4. OBSERVATION (INTELLIGENCE) REGIMENTS. a. General.

The technical efficiency of Japanese observation equipment and techniques was notably low prior to the outbreak of the present war. Since the beginning of hostilities, however, three observation (intelligence) regiments have been identified. In instances such as in the Hong Kong campaign, where Japanese counterbattery has been very accurate, these results were achieved, it is believed, by use of sound ranging, flash ranging, and well-coordinated air observation. Existence of observation regiments and evidence of their satisfactory performance afford additional reason to anticipate improvement in Japanese artillery techniques. Balloon regiments are known to exist, and independent balloon companies were employed for artillery observation at Singapore. A motorized balloon company, with a total personnel of 145, is equipped with one observation balloon, and its transport is handled by 23 motor vehicles.

b. The Observation (Intelligence) Regiment. The observation regiment, which is commanded by a lieutenant colonel, has a total personnel of 675. Such units thus far identified have been horse-drawn, although motorization may have begun. Normal organization includes a headquarters group, a survey unit, a plotting unit, and a sound detector unit. Headquarters unit, in addition to administrative personnel, includes a meteorological, a photographic, and a signal section. The survey unit is organized into three platoons, each of which has three survey sections and one computing section. The plotting unit also has three platoons, each of which maintains three plotting stations. The unit is believed to include facilities and personnel for target plotting, flash spotting, and the interpretation of aerial photographs. The sound-detector unit is responsible for the operation of six listening posts.

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Section II. BASIC DOCTRINE.

5. RELATION OF ARTILLERY TO INFANTRY. a. *Offensive.*

Any study of Japanese artillery doctrine must be predicated upon a thorough understanding of their infantry tactical doctrines. Constant insistence upon the superiority of the offense is the dominant consideration of Japanese infantry tactics. The primary objective is to close with the enemy as soon as possible, so that the assumed inherent superiority of the Japanese soldier in hand-to-hand fighting may be exploited with maximum advantage. Time after time this emphasis upon the offense has engendered decisions to attack in situations where orthodox tactical doctrine would indicate the necessity of assuming the defensive. Attacks are likely to be launched without adequate reconnaissance and without consideration of time and space factors, with the result that the vital principle of concentration of effort has often been flouted.

Envelopments, either single or double, are the preferred maneuvers in Japanese offensive tactics. A determined frontal pressure is maintained by a holding attack, while the main force is thrown against one or both enemy flanks. The classic objective of envelopment tactics is to attain complete encirclement of the hostile forces. Frontal attacks may be delivered, however, if the desire to deny the enemy time to build up his forces and fire power outweighs the usual prudent restrictions on this form of attack which the Japanese normally recognize. In a frontal attack the main effort is made against a soft spot in the opposing line, with the objective of scoring a swift, deep penetration along a narrow front.

If tanks are employed, Japanese combat regulations stipulate that leading tanks are expected to rush deeply into the zone of hostile artillery. Friendly artillery, on the other hand, is assigned a mission of covering the advance of the tanks through the forward areas of hostile anti-tank weapons.

b. *Defensive.* There are occasions when the Japanese commander is confronted with a hostile force so overwhelmingly superior in numbers, fire power, or position that reversion to the defense is unavoidable despite doctrinal precepts. Yet a profound dislike of the defense permeates all tactical manuals and imbues officers and enlisted men alike with the conviction that it is nothing more than a passing phase in combat. The objective of defense, according to Japanese doctrine, is to inflict such losses on a temporarily superior enemy that eventually his advantages will be neutralized and the offensive can be resumed. This conviction has the effect of stimulating eagerness to initiate counterattacks which are often, accordingly, delivered without adequate preparation.

c. Application to Artillery. The doctrinal principles that so completely permeate infantry doctrine have their corollaries in artillery tactics. The primary function of Japanese field artillery is conceived to be the immediate and close support of infantry assault. The speed of movement and the constant endeavor to achieve surprise, considered so essential in an infantry offensive, apply with equal validity to artillery doctrine.

To be sure, the Japanese recognize other important artillery objectives. Enemy infantry is to be crushed and the weapons emplaced on his flanks are to be destroyed by artillery fire, according to Japanese artillery instruction. Obstacles that impede infantry advance are assigned to the artillery for destruction, and the capabilities of artillery for the disruption of hostile rear lines of communication are stressed. In actual practice nevertheless, the function of artillery as a direct infantry support weapon has been emphasized almost to the exclusion of other missions.

Preoccupation with the close-support mission of artillery has been, in turn, primarily responsible for the incorporation of artillery subunits with infantry in regimental gun companies and the battalions, as well as sub-allocations of independent artillery units. Technical deficiencies of Japanese artillery and serious production limitations have militated against the mass employment of artillery under high-echelon control. But basically the Japanese method of allocating artillery has resulted from the doctrine of close support for infantry.

6. FORWARD EMPLACEMENT *a. General.* Insistence upon the necessity of keeping artillery well forward in support of advancing infantry amounts almost to a fetish among Japanese artillery officers, and the enlisted men seem eager to demonstrate that they are just as ready as the infantrymen to brave the dangers of front-line combat. Positions are sited with a few hundred yards of foremost enemy defense points, and command posts, in many cases, are located right beside the guns to make voice control of fire possible. There have been instances when Japanese artillery fire was laid only 50 yards ahead of advancing troops. Japanese doctrine also teaches that, except in a jungle, the artillery should be behind the center of the infantry so that covering fire can be laid over most of the front on both holding and enveloping attacks, despite the restrictions on attack directions that such disposition would entail.

b. Jungle Fighting. Jungle fighting aggravates the difficulties of extending close fire support because of the difficulty of locating friendly infantry and the necessity of firing over the trees and thus too far ahead of the infantry to enable full advantage to be taken of the artillery support. As stated in Japanese doctrine:

If an artillery position in the rear of the front line is selected, it usually means that the position must be well to the rear in order to permit firing safely over the trees and above the head of our own troops. To choose such a position means that in